

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1-18 (canceled).

19 (new). A climatic cabinet, comprising:

an interior configured to hold specimen slides;

a transporting device to load and unload the interior with the specimen slides;

a loading opening for transporting the specimen slides between the interior and an exterior of the cabinet during loading and unloading thereof, said loading opening having an interior face and an exterior face, wherein said loading opening is located in a cabinet sidewall, and has dimensions substantially conforming to the specimen slides;

a door adapted to tightly seal said loading opening; and

a gas supply system for supplying a flow of a gas proximate said loading opening, wherein said gas supply system comprises at least one gas exhaust opening proximate said loading opening configured to cover a cross-section of the loading opening with a gas curtain.

20 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 19, wherein said at least one gas exhaust opening is provided proximate the exterior face of said loading opening.

21 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 19, wherein said at least one gas exhaust opening discharges into said loading opening.

22 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 21, wherein gas exhaust openings are provided in one or more pairs of opposing walls surrounding said loading opening.

23 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 21, further comprising several rows of gas exhaust openings arranged one behind another.

24 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 21, wherein at least one gas exhaust opening is inclined towards the exterior of said cabinet.

25 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 21, further comprising a gas collecting chamber surrounding said loading opening, said gas collecting chamber being linked with said at least one gas exhaust opening and connected to a gas supply conduit.

26 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 25, wherein said gas supply conduit conducts the gas through at least one of the interior of the climatic cabinet and a heat exchanger area of the climatic cabinet.

27 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 19, wherein the gas is nitrogen.

28 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 19, wherein said at least one gas exhaust opening is located adjacent the exterior face of said loading opening.

29 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 28, wherein gas exhaust openings are provided along at least one set of opposing pairs of sides of said loading opening adjacent the exterior face thereof.

30 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 19, wherein at least one gas exhaust opening is provided in said door.

31 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 19, wherein said at least one gas exhaust opening is angled away from said climatic cabinet.

32 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 19, further comprising a control device for controlling a control valve in said gas supply system, and wherein said gas supply system is responsive to opening and closing of said door.

33 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 32, wherein said control device activates said gas flow at one of during and just prior to opening of said door and deactivates said gas flow after said door is closed.

34 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 32, wherein said control device regulates said gas flow as a function of a temperature difference between the interior and exterior of said climatic cabinet.

35 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 19, wherein said door comprises an automatically opening and closing door.

36 (new). The climatic cabinet of claim 19, wherein said climatic cabinet comprises a cooling cabinet.